

REMARKS

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for reviewing the present application.

A total of 20 claims are now in the present application. The foregoing amendments are presented in response to the Examiner's Answer mailed December 9, 2008, wherefore reconsideration of this application is requested.

By way of the above-noted amendments, independent claims 1, 9 and 20 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 2, 10 and 21, respectively. Claims 2, 10, 16-19, 21 and 27 have been cancelled to avoid redundancy. Claims 3, 7, 11 and 22 have been amended in view of the cancellation of claims 2, 10 and 21. Clearly, no new subject matter has been introduced.

Referring to the text of the Examiner's Answer:

- claims 1-8, 16-17 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter;
- claims 1, 6, 9, 20 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being unpatentable over the teaching of United States Patent No. 5,585,954 (Taga);
- claims 8, 16-19 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over the teaching of Taga in view of United States Patent No. 5,325,397 (Scholz);
- claims 15 and 26 are allowed; and
- claims 2-5, 7, 10-14 and 21-25 are objected to as depending from a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The rejection of claims 1-8, 16-17 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 is a new ground of rejection raised in the Examiner's Answer mailed December 9, 2008. All of the foregoing objections and claim rejections are believed to be traversed by the above-noted claim amendments, and further in view of the following discussion.

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Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 101

Independent claims 1 has been amended to define that a processor is controlled to execute the claimed method steps. Claims 16, 17 and 27 have been cancelled. Accordingly, it is believed that claim 1 now explicitly defines subject matter falling within one of the categories of statutory subject matter. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 101 is believed to be in order, and such action is courteously solicited.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a)

Independent claims 1, 9 and 20 have been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 2, 10 and 21, respectively. Because each of claims 2, 10 and 21 have previously been identified as defining allowable subject matter, amended claims 1, 9 and 20 are now believed to be allowable.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 103(a) is believed to be in order, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicant requests early reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,



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